The head of a specially selected family has the duty of twisting off the head of the chief, and not until this is done is the chief officially dead. The head is buried for a year, then dug up and transferred to a box, which is also kept in the tomb. The head is questioned at times of stress (such as a drought) in the same way that questions are put to the corpse of a commoner. If the head swings forward, a sacrifice may be necessary to remove the drought. The house of a chief is not burnt at his death (but those of commoners are?); neither may it be repaired in any way, but the succeeding chief must live in it until the structure collapses.(1)

Mourning for a chief lasts seven days, during which his children and wives wear strips of oxhide on their left wrists.

Widows (of chiefs or commoners) must leave their hair loose and wear cloths which conceal them from head to toe. For three days a widow must sleep close to the corpse of her husband, with only a stick between them. During this time she has no food, and her wailing is expected to be almost continuous day and night. When the corpse is tied and prepared for burial relatives support the corpse and make it move towards her so that she may bid it farewell. She does not attend the funeral. At the end of a month of mourning she must lie for one night in the place where her husband lay the night before burial. At the beer-drinking which marks the end of the period of mourning an ocisbondo guides her hand as she distributes the beer.(2)

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.272.
(2) Hambly, op.cit., p.269. Hambly states that mourning for a chief lasts only seven days, while from this information it appears that commoners are mourned for a whole month.